



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 4  
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER  
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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

January 21, 2015

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.  
Regional Administrator  
Southeast Regional Office  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Regional Office  
263 13th Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

**Subject: EPA NEPA Review Comments on NMFS's FSEIS for "Amendment 16 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, U.S. Waters - Adjustments to the Annual Catch Limit and Accountability Measures for Royal Red Shrimp" CEQ #20150001**

Dear Dr. Crabtree:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the subject National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) in accordance with our responsibilities under Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. EPA understands that this FSEIS analyzes the impacts of a reasonable range of alternatives intended to: 1) set the commercial annual catch limit for royal red shrimp and determine if the use of a commercial quota should continue, and 2) choose a commercial accountability measure for royal red shrimp. EPA reviewed and provided comments on the DSEIS for this proposed action in a letter dated September 30, 2015.

EPA has the responsibility to review and comment on major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, including FMPs and FMP Amendments (Amendments) as developed, approved, and implemented under the MSA where those Plans and Amendments are subject to the EIS requirement of NEPA, but it should be clear that we defer to NMFS and the Council as to the development of fishery statistics and the relative importance of the commercial and recreational fisheries for each species.

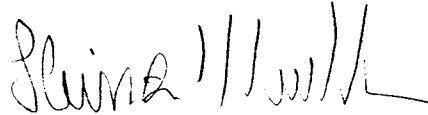
EPA appreciates that NMFS provided a dedicated section at the end of the FSEIS (appendix F) that provided specific responses to our comments on the DSEIS. We have chosen to focus our review on NMFS's responses to our previous comments. EPA provided comments relating to the environmental justice analysis and data collection associated with royal red shrimp landings. EPA notes that additional text and discussion was provided that satisfies our concerns for both comments. EPA has no additional comments.

**Summary:**

EPA supports NMFS and the Council on this Royal Red Shrimp amendment and gives deference to their fishery expertise. Lastly, we request a copy of the NMFS ROD.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review this FSEIS. Should NMFS have questions regarding our comments on the Amendment actions, please feel free to contact Dan Holliman at 404/562-9531 or [holliman.daniel@epa.gov](mailto:holliman.daniel@epa.gov) of my staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heinz J. Mueller", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Heinz J. Mueller  
Chief, NEPA Program Office